

**Language through individual intelligences- A review of Multiple  
Intelligence method In India**

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**Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to analyse the capaciousness of the Multiple Intelligence method attributed to learn English as a second language in the context of Indian Classrooms. Though this method has laid its roots in 1980's, the method has not yet reached to a greater extent in Indian curriculum. It is still waiting to enter the whole of Indian academic scenario, to adapt and to yield good results. At this juncture, Indian students are in an exigency for an innovative method to enjoy an easier and effective way of learning English. Their needs, backgrounds and interests are still at scarce to scale the heights of modern trends in English Language teaching. Multiple Intelligence method is one important trend whose objective is to set an atmosphere for skill-based pedagogy of individuals. Hence, this paper attempts to revisit Multiple Intelligence method in an Indian classroom situation, to re-evaluate the method and to pave way for maximum and meticulous language learning.

**Keywords :** Multiple Intelligence method , Indian curriculum, skill-based pedagogy

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### **Introduction**

Doubts are the source of investigation. Investigation opens doors to inventions. It's been a wonder for almost all second language teachers of India to find that it's still a tricky task for students to speak in English after being exposed to the language for nearly 12 years. In addition to this long term exposure we have agreeable spoken English centres. Yet, English has been an unearthed Himalayas and most of the youths stumble to speak or even to write in English. Many researches are being carried out to spot the explanation of the malfunction. Results of such researches suggest many new methods which attempt to achieve the goals of acquiring English language. One such method is Multiple Intelligence Method which originated outside India but invited to India for subject classes and later in language classes.

This method is quite different from other methods though being a part of psychological theory. The Multiple Intelligence theory was given birth by Howard Gardner in 1983. The theory is based on the concept "nobody is identical and each one is capable of something different that can be correlated as intelligence". Be it habit or attitude every human

being is different. Hence, the learning approach too differs. The theorist tries to identify eight intelligences. According to these intelligences, the learners can be dealt with by the teachers. For example, In general studies, Einstein and other famous scientists who were dismissed from their schools were not ready for the verbal classes. They wanted everything to be done practically , visually and spatially. Whereas, Ramanujan loved learning logically and mathematically. These examples reveal the respective intelligences they had. Similarly it applies well in language classes too.

This theory was given a great welcome in English Language Teaching. It went widespread and received good results. Yet, Indian context couldn't make use of the method to a greater extent. Hence, the following study discovers the gap, finding the difficulties and the possibilities of Multiple Intelligence method in future.

### **Review of Literature**

**Altan(2012)** says that Multiple Intelligence theory is the most influencing psychological theory in the field of education for it reveals mechanisms of scaffolding and the interiorization and negotiation of meaning that allow the learner's understating and the acquisition of the mentality corresponding to a biologist, musician, author or linguist. **Ibmian & Hadban(2013)** conclude their study that there is positive effective to motivate and activate students' mind regarding different types of intelligences which activate students' mind and English learning will be improved. **Nagajothi(2013)** argues that Multiple Intelligence theory paves way for the language teachers to recognize the holistic nature of learners and adopt constructive pedagogy to suit the student diversity with different learning profiles. She also highlights the enlightenment with entertainment in the framework of MI method.

**Research questions**

1. How is Multiple Intelligence method different from other methods?
2. How can Multiple Intelligence method serve the purpose of ELT in India?
3. What are the hitches the Multiple Intelligence method face to earn a status in India?
4. What can be the solutions to overcome the inconveniences?

Observations were made by exploring and analysing Multiple Intelligence method with respect to the prevalent methods. There are many reasons as to why Multiple Intelligence method is preferred over other methods. The first and foremost convincing reason is that the method does not degrade the learner's capacity which is a positive input. **Krashen (1987)** supported a learning situation that has a "low affective filter" whereby the learners learn to use the language in a non-threatening and fun environment. Otherwise, learners will feel uncomfortable and insecure which will further induce a "psychological barrier" to communication and learning (**Littlewood, 1995**). The Multiple Intelligence method focuses the individual intelligence possessed by the students. Particularly in India, Language teachers are interested in depreciating the so called "poor learners" whereas celebrate the "bright students". This creates a division among students which in turn makes the bright students feel superior and the slow learners to feel incapable. On the other hand, nobody is categorised into levels or classes in MI approach which prevents negative impacts in the minds of students. Hence, MI approach stays strong in the belief that every learner is capable of achieving the same goal irrespective of difference in intelligence and there is no space for division and streaming.

Learning a language becomes more effective when the process is accompanied with interest. Interest is not innate but it is awakened by the atmosphere we live in. Hence, MI approach accomplishes in offering an environment where learners come forward with interest. This is explicitly evinced in the way the methods are designed and handled by teachers. The activities are planned with the outline of the students' collective intelligences. For example, when a class becomes an interactive room, even the passive learner of this activity observes the events and develops interest. Likewise, a musically interested learner kindles the learning spirit in the less interested students. There is scope for mutual development and shared skills. At the end of the programme, every other learner specialises more than a single intelligence which also makes learning English easy and fast. Being exposed to all types of intelligences, the students are made competent enough to confront the world. In addition to this, this method upholds language development of every individual. The learners of all intelligences become professionals in language skills.

The complexity in learning a language is not felt by the learners since the tasks are set effectual as well as painless. The traditional way of teaching a language through rules and verbal medium have been felt as a burden but MI clears the pressure of sensing the intricacy in language learning process. MI does not yield to outdated teaching and also does not belong to modern trends because it neither extends its territory to technology nor to the past trends like "chalk and talk" method.

The significance of MI is that it unites the conflicting concepts of Nature (Intelligence) and Nurture (Experience). The behaviourists say that language acquisition takes place through "operant conditioning" while the Nativism followers argue that language is acquired through the innate ability called Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Similarly

MI customises the innate intelligence of the learners to get hold of language and grants opportunities to develop their language skills through experience.

MI fits Indian context because India is a land of differences. Second language learners of India have a multicultural and multilingual background within classrooms. Naturally, the set up is heterogeneous where the learners cannot adhere to the common curriculum of language learning. The curriculum for language acquisition is limited within the orb of mathematical and linguistic abilities. According to MI approach, this kind of syllabus can suit only to learners who own the mathematical or linguistic intelligences. The other learners struggle hard to learn a language and lag behind them.

When there are too much offers, naturally the quality and quantity hit upon a fall. Similarly, when MI came into existence, the language teachers found many snags. India stands second in world population and so are the classrooms. The classrooms are crammed with students. This becomes a challenging issue when a language teacher tries to identify the intelligences of students and even more greater issue when activities are introduced. Another shortcoming is the competence of teachers. For a class of heterogeneous set up, the teacher has to be innovative and dedicated in establishing this method. Even after making this arrangement supportive, if the school allotment does not afford ample time, the method becomes a failure. In addition to these issues, the method demands a comfortable and extensive space for all the students to participate.

There are umpteen resources available but how to handle them is a question. So, there is no solution but resolution. MI method can easily fit to Indian environment. The role of teachers is equally important as the collaboration of the students. The teachers should take the

initiative by motivating the students. And with respect to the number of students, MI dislocates the problem of number by conducting activities. A class of 80 students can be divided into 8 groups randomly and can be involved in eight different activities based on the eight intelligences wherein the teacher also recognizes the individuals as the students find where their interests lie. The activities can be changed every day so that the students get an idea of all the intelligences.

### **Discussion**

The possibilities of MI in India have been viewed so far in comparison to other traditional methods. Traditional methods have been advocating the stand of teaching English language focussing the function whereas MI moves a step forward focussing the procedure and means. In simple terms, the followers of traditional method want their learners to speak English and followers of MI want them to learn to speak English with the light of their capacity and intelligence. The latter emphasises on the desires of learners. Putting MI into action does not involve a long process.



A positive image is created for the teacher who considers every skill of the students. Thus, MI is the most constructive method that can be implemented in India which can fortify the skills in students.

## Conclusion

The outset of MI can sound idealistic but it can do the maximum when it is put into practice. MI is not something totally new in India. Language teachers in India have always carried out tasks concerning puzzles, debates and peer learning. At present, the smart rooms attribute much to the teaching of language concentrating the mode of grabbing the student's attention. MI stands in between the "chalk and talk" and smart classes. It does not require any material for performing. A simple classroom, an innovative and patient teacher who can present models if needed and students constitute the language class in MI. A Quantitative analysis can prove the study.

## Abbreviation

MI- Multiple Intelligence

ELT- English Language Teaching

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